



**American
Red Cross**

Together, we can save a life

General Blood and Platelet Donor Eligibility Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in donating blood or platelets. Your donation helps patients in need. If you cannot donate blood or platelets, there may be opportunities to help the American Red Cross Blood Services by volunteering in other ways. If you would like to make an appointment to donate blood, have questions about donating, or wish to find out more about other ways to volunteer, please call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (1-800-448-3543). To make an appointment or find out more about donating platelets (available only in Wichita, Kan.), please call (316) 268-0875, or e-mail at wichitapl@usa.redcross.org.

Please note: The following is not a complete list of eligibility guidelines. Medical professionals are available at each blood donation center to discuss details of each donor's health history confidentially prior to blood donation.

The final determination of eligibility is made at that time. Some donor eligibility rules are specified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for every blood bank in the country. Other rules are determined by the particular blood bank and may differ between Red Cross and non-Red Cross blood donor centers.

Donor eligibility guidelines are intended to protect the health and safety of both the donor as well as the patient who will receive the transfusion.

The criteria listed below are provided as **guidelines** to assist you in determining whether you are eligible to be a blood donor. There may have been some changes to these criteria since the last revision date. For more information, please call the American Red Cross Central Plains Region Blood Services at 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (1-800-448-3543) or go to www.redcross.org/br/centralplains.

GENERAL GUIDELINES: To give blood or platelets, you must be *healthy*, be at least 17 years old and weigh at least 110 pounds. *Healthy* means you feel well and can perform normal activities. If you have a chronic condition such as diabetes or high blood pressure, *healthy* could also mean you are being treated and the condition is under control.

Blood can be donated every 56 days, and platelets can be donated every two weeks up to 24 times per year.

Each potential donor receives a brief examination where temperature, pulse, blood pressure and blood iron (hemoglobin or hematocrit) are determined.

Allergy, stuffy nose, itchy eyes, dry cough: Acceptable as long as you feel well, have no fever, and have no problems breathing.

Antibiotics: Must have finished antibiotics for an infection (bacterial) and free of symptoms. Acceptable if you are taking antibiotics to prevent an infection, for example, following dental procedures or for acne. If you have a temperature above 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit, you may not donate until the fever is passed.

ASPIRIN — SPECIAL NOTE: If you take aspirin or other medication containing aspirin, you **must wait 48 hours to donate platelets**. If taking an anti-platelet drug (e.g., Plavix ®), the donor must wait seven days after the last dose before giving platelets.

Asthma: Acceptable as long as you are not having difficulty breathing at the time of donation, and you otherwise feel well. Medications for asthma do not prevent you from donating.

Blood exposure to someone else's blood: Donors must wait 12 months before giving blood, if they were exposed to someone

else's blood, usually via needlestick; includes sharing toothbrush or razors with person with viral hepatitis or HIV.

Blood pressure medications: Donors who are taking blood pressure medication are evaluated for acceptability by their blood pressure reading on the day of donation.

Botox injections: Acceptable.

Cancer: Acceptable if the cancer was treated with surgery, radiation or chemotherapy, and it has been at least five years since treatment was completed with no cancer recurrence. If you had leukemia or lymphoma, including Hodgkin's Disease and mycosis fungoids, you are not eligible to donate. Some low-risk cancers, including squamous or basal cell cancers of the skin, do not require a five-year waiting period.

Certain precancerous conditions, such as those of the cervix or the colon, do not prevent you from giving blood, if the condition has been treated successfully.

You should discuss your particular situation with the health historian at the time of donation.

Cholesterol, high: Acceptable. Medications to lower cholesterol levels do not disqualify you from donating.

Cold, flu, sore throat: Wait if you have a fever or a productive cough (bringing up phlegm). Wait if you don't feel well on the day of donation. Wait until you have completed antibiotic treatment for and are recovered from sinus, throat or lung infection.

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, Variant (vCJD); also known as Mad Cow Disease: See attached sheet about travel and vCJD.
(continued on back)

Dental procedures: Acceptable after teeth cleaning, scaling, root canal, fillings and tooth extractions as long as there is no infection present. Wait for three days after having other types of oral surgery, or after treatment for an abscess or infection in the mouth. Wait until antibiotics being taken for a dental infection are finished.

Depression, anxiety: Acceptable as long as you feel well and are comfortable with the blood donation process. Medications for depression or anxiety do not disqualify you from donating.

Diabetes: Acceptable if disease is well controlled.

Epilepsy, seizures: Acceptable as long as you have been seizure-free for the last three months. Medications for seizures do not prevent you from donating.

Heart disease: Depends on specific condition, symptoms, and limitations, with at least six months since diagnosis, evaluation or treatments. May be on medication(s).

Hepatitis, jaundice: Since age 11, if you had hepatitis (inflammation of the liver) caused by a virus, or unexplained jaundice (yellow discoloration of the skin), you are not eligible to donate blood. This includes those who had hepatitis or jaundice with infectious mononucleosis at any age as well as any other *known* viral hepatitis at any age.

Acceptable if you had jaundice or hepatitis caused by something other than a viral infection, such as medications, Gilbert's disease, bile duct obstruction, alcohol, gallstones or trauma to the liver.

Herpes: Acceptable as long as you are feeling well.

HIV, AIDS: Mandatory deferral for persons with AIDS or AIDS-like symptoms. Not acceptable if individual has engaged in any AIDS at-risk behavior or activity per the guidelines established by the Food and Drug Administration.

Immunization, vaccination: Some vaccines are acceptable; otherwise, duration of deferral depends on specific vaccine(s) received. Military vaccines require an eight-week deferral.

Medications: In almost all cases, medications will not prevent you from giving blood. Your eligibility will be based on the reason the medication was prescribed. As long as the condition is under control and you are healthy, blood donation is usually permitted.

There are a handful of drugs for which the FDA requires waiting periods. The waiting periods begin from when the last dose was taken. These drugs are: Accutane (isotretinoin); Proscar (finasteride); Propecia (finasteride); Avodart (dutasteride); Soriatane (acitretin); Tegison (etretinate); human growth hormone and insulin from cows (bovine insulin).

If you are taking prescription blood thinners, such as Coumadin or heparin, you should not donate since your blood will not clot normally. If your doctor discontinues your treatment with blood thinners, wait seven days after last dose before donating.

Piercing (ears, body), electrolysis: Acceptable as long as the instruments used were known to be sterile; otherwise, the person must wait 12 months before donating blood.

Pregnancy, nursing: Women who are pregnant are not eligible to donate. Wait six weeks after giving birth. Nursing does not disqualify you from donating.

Skin disease, rash, acne: Acceptable as long as the skin over the vein to be used to collect blood is not affected. If the skin disease has become infected, wait until the infection has cleared before donating. Taking antibiotics to control acne does not prevent you from donating.

Surgery: Acceptable as long as the underlying reason for surgery is also acceptable for blood donation. Sutured minor cuts and lacerations are acceptable if no inflammation or infection exists. If a laceration has become infected, wait until the infection has cleared before donating. Wait 12 months if you had a blood transfusion or a tissue, bone or organ transplant that required blood, tissue, bone or organ from another person. There is a 12-month waiting period for corneal transplants (previously, corneal transplants restricted people from donating indefinitely).

Tattoo: Acceptable if done by state-regulated and licensed entity using sterile or single-use needles and ink; otherwise a 12-month waiting period.

Travel outside of U.S./immigration: Wait 12 months after travel in an area where malaria is found. Wait three years after moving to the United States after living in a country where malaria is found.

Persons who have spent long periods of time in countries where vCJD (also known as Mad Cow Disease) is found, are not eligible to donate. This requirement is related to concerns about variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD). *See attached sheet.*

Persons who were born in or who lived in certain countries in Africa, or who have had sexual contact with persons who were born in or who lived in certain African countries are not eligible to donate. This requirement is related to concerns about HIV Group O.

Helpful and Healthful Tips

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR BLOOD DONATION

On the day of your donation —

- For blood donations, drink extra water before and after your donation to replace the volume of blood you will donate.
- For platelet donations, drink a normal amount of water, but not extra.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks.

Between donations — Give your body plenty of iron. Iron comes from the food in your diet. Foods rich in iron include red meat, fish, poultry, broccoli, beans, raisins and prunes.

Eating foods rich in vitamin C (such as citrus fruits) helps your body absorb the iron in the foods you eat.